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Children's Literature

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My book *Diary of a Butterfly* is based on Doreen Cronin's books *Diary of a Worm, Diary of a Spider,* and *Diary of a Fly.* When I decided to base my children's book off of Cronin's, I assumed that the variety of bug species in my book – caterpillars, ladybugs, ants, bees, and butterflies – would interest a broad range of students. But strictly based on the surveys given for this assignment, children seem to have no interest in bugs at all. The sixth graders interests fell mostly in sports. With the surveys, however, the book I'm writing is aimed at a younger age group; it's probably a preschool through first grade level text. So, I constructed my own survey based on the students' reading/writing habits and interests in that age range. The questions I asked were, “Do you like to read?”, “Do you have a favorite book? If so, what is it?”, “What are your favorite books mostly about?”, “Have you ever written a story, and if so, what was your story about?” Seventeen of twenty students surveyed said they liked to read, and the majority of students' favorite books were about animals, like dogs, cats, and even dinosaurs. (The rest mostly liked army-related material). As for writing, the majority haven't written stories. What I got from the surveys as a whole is that children are willing to read, but books that keep their engagement are ones that they're interested in. Also, children vary on interest based on age.

Writing a book about bugs isn't a far-off topic to animals, so I'll assume that the children listening/reading to this text will enjoy it. I choose Cronin's books because they are some of my favorite children's text. Not only are they funny, they're educational. I tried to mirror this in *Diary of a Butterfly.* For the content, Cronin creates a humorous story about bugs, living animated lives, but still maintaining their bug-like qualities like what they eat or how they act. Cronin brought an entire world to life, and I expanded on that by talking about bugs she hadn't touched upon. Readers will learn about a vast variety of insects who live in our gardens or backyards. It's likely the insects in her books are neighbors to the insects in mine. Aside from these similarities, I also duplicated Cronin's *Diary* characteristics, like style, small amount of text per page, and scene-by-scene storytelling. The way the story is organized is by diary entries (with additional dialogue through speech bubbles) of a caterpillar going through metamorphosis to become a butterfly. It's a quick process, and the dates I've chosen were specified to meet this time frame. Illustrating the text prosed a problem because capturing a specific moment was difficult. I had to think about what the most important moment was, but wanted to tell a story through the pictures, like Cronin does in her *Diary* books.

Despite students not having a strong interest in bugs like I anticipated, I still feel like *Diary of a Caterpillar* will spark their interest enough for them to learn about the daily life of a caterpillar turning to a butterfly. I emulated Cronin's stories as best I could through similar styles, organized, and content.